Rural Youth Development Grants Program

__FY 2011 Request for Applications__

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 10, 2011

U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RURAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.500.**

DATES: Applications must be received in Grants.gov by close of business (COB) on **June 10, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. The Project Management Report and the Accomplishment Report are due by COB on **June 7, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Templates and tools for these reports will be sent electronically to eligible grantees by the NIFA Program Leader on or before the date the RFA is posted on the NIFA web site. These reports must be submitted electronically to the NIFA National Program Leader at: ruralyouth@nifa.usda.gov. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OGFM@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **Rural Youth Development Grants Program** RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of funding and requests applications for the **Rural Youth Development Grants (RYD) Program** for fiscal year (FY) **2011** to **support the expansion of effective, high quality youth development programs for youth in rural areas and small towns.** In FY 2011, approximately **$1.7 million** is available to support the RYD program.

This notice identifies the objectives for **RYD** projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a **RYD**

grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

Table of Contents

APPENDICES

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Title IV of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7630) authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), the National 4-H Council (4-H Council), and the National FFA Organization (FFA). Section 7309 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008 reauthorized 7 U.S.C. 7630, which was also amended to provide additional flexibility in content delivery to each organization receiving funds and to allow recipients to redistribute all or part of the funds to individual councils or local chapters without further need of approval from the Secretary.

A portion of the funding in 2002 was used to support a process that engaged thousands of youth from across America in a dialogue. The process was designed to identify their perceived needs and issues as well as suggested solutions. In February, 2002, nearly 1200 youth and adults representing over 600 youth organizations nationwide participated in the National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century in Washington, DC. This forum produced a report that included recommendations regarding the future of youth programs and youth organizations.

The recommendations focus on the importance of:
- Breaking down barriers to participation, especially for rural youth;
- Enhancing opportunities for youth involvement in policy and decision-making;
- Creating safe and inviting environments for youth activities; and
- Improving access to information and technology.

Participants suggested that national youth organizations collaborate to maximize resources and programs for youth. The report concluded that rural youth encounter economic and physical barriers that prevent their receiving adequate care, services, or resources necessary for healthy development. The Rural Youth Development Grants (RYD) program is intended to address the above issues as well as others, some of which are specified in Part I.B.

In 2005, the eligible youth organizations developed a broad framework that brought a focus to the program while honoring and recognizing the unique attributes of the organizations. The organizations determined that they all provided opportunities for young people to work in partnership with adults to gain leadership, citizenship and life skills. The expectation that members of their respective organizations would improve communities through service learning was another commonality. As a result of this collective work, the overarching theme of this grant program became, "Youth Build Strong Rural Communities." The sub-theme that emerged was, "Rural youth learn and apply leadership, citizenship, and life skills to improve their own lives and the communities in which they live." This philosophy undergirds the program design and methodologies of this grant program.

B. Purpose and Priorities

As specified in 7 U.S.C. 7630, applications are being solicited to establish projects to expand the youth development programs carried out by the eligible organizations in rural areas or small towns.

Broad Purposes:
- Support and enhance the goals, objectives, and priorities of the eligible youth organizations;
- Support programs which address issues and needs of rural youth;
- Involve youth in design and implementation of their educational activities;
- Increase knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary for rural youth to live productive, contributing, and fulfilling lives; and
- Increase economic opportunities and sustainability and improve quality of life in rural communities through enhanced human, social, civic, natural, financial, cultural, and built capital.

Assisting Eligible Organizations to Meet Goals:

One of the purposes of this program is to support and enhance the goals, objectives, and priorities of the eligible youth organizations. The mission of each of the eligible organizations includes leadership, citizenship, and life skill development of their members. The organizations also articulate community service (service learning) as strong program components and strategies. With a focus on leadership, citizenship, and life skill development through service learning and social entrepreneurship, the RYD program strongly supports and enhances the missions and priorities of the eligible organizations. For example:

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

Beginning in 2006, GSUSA initiated the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). This outcomes driven model provides the framework for all Girl Scout programs. Using the 15 outcomes and indicators for each age level, outlined in *Transforming Leadership*, Girl Scouts understand leadership development at each phase of a girls' scouting experience.

Challenge and Change…a curriculum driven leadership program for teen girls specifically developed for this RYD grant program… and the GSLE share many of the same outcomes. Some examples include learning: how to build relationships, about their own abilities, and about their broader community. *Challenge and Change* uses concepts of social entrepreneurship which applies business models to solve social issues. Both the curriculum and organization have received national and international recognition. *Challenge and Change* sits at the top of the GSLE and is widely seen as a model curriculum that provides a venue for girls to earn their Gold Awards, traditionally the highest honor in Girl Scouts.

The National FFA Organization (FFA)

The opening statement of the FFA Creed states, "I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of **deeds…**" The organization's commitment to service is also found in the Motto, "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, *Living to Serve*." With these words, hundreds of thousands of young people utilize the skills and talents learned in their agricultural classrooms to effect positive changes in their communities through service and civic engagement.

The RYD program has provided the opportunity for FFA members across the country to have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge gained in agricultural classrooms through meaningful service for their communities. Furthermore, the RYD program was the catalyst to move FFA from a model of "community service" to a much more rich and meaningful model of "service-learning" during the 2007 National FFA Convention. This transition all began with the RYD funding that allowed FFA to begin to create resources for agricultural teachers and members on service and civic engagement. Funding also supports service-learning projects that meet authentic community needs, build upon knowledge gained in the classroom and support youth and adult partnerships.

The National 4-H Council (4-H)

The RYD Program supports the 4-H Vision which is "a world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change." In addition, the 4-H pledge, in part, says "I pledge my….hands to larger service…for my club, my community, my country and my world." The RYD program supports the vision of the organization and the pledge that is recited often by millions of youth. Using "Engaging Youth, Serving Communities" as the theme for the RYD program, teams of trained youth and adults convene town meetings to identify community needs and develop and implement plans to address those needs.

Additionally, 4-H is currently focusing program efforts in three broad categories: Science, Engineering, and Technology; Healthy Living; and Citizenship. The RYD program is the cornerstone of the Citizenship area.

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA)

The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness. For nearly a century, the BSA has helped build the future leaders of this country by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun. The Boy Scouts of America believes — and through nearly a century of experience, knows — that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible, and productive society. The mission statement of the BSA says, "The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader…" The RYD program provides opportunities for youth to become strong leaders and responsible citizens.

Addressing Youth Issues:

In addition to assisting the eligible organizations with reaching their goals and objectives, the RYD program aims to address issues facing rural youth. Research, studies, and public opinion polls indicate there are several important youth issues that can be addressed through existing youth development organizations. The following list represents some, but certainly not all, of those issues. The literature reveals that youth living in rural areas may potentially:

- Experience less community interconnection of people due to long commute times of parents and children to work and school which leads to:
  - a. Lack of first hand observation of potential career opportunities;
  - b. Fewer adult role models for civic responsibility and volunteering; and
  - c. More unsupervised time, generally after-school.
- Experience geographic isolation due to distance between homes and towns, and a lack of public transportation;
- Have fewer physical locations in which to interact with peers and adults;
- Have limited programs and opportunities;
- Have limited employment opportunities, especially meaningful employment;
- Have seen a threefold increase in gang-related activities;
- Have limited access to health care, services and resources necessary for healthy development;
- Have access to technology at school, but not necessarily at home;
- Live in poverty; and
- Be included in the growing obesity epidemic.

For a more detailed discussion of these issues plus others, review "Key Issues Facing Rural Youth." Daniel F. Perkins. Southern Rural Development Center Series #228. Web site: http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/archive/228.pdf

Data on rural America can be found via many sources. One of the most comprehensive is the Economic Research Service at USDA. Web site: http://www.ers.usda.gov

Research Base:

There are three major areas of research on which this program is built: 1) the Human Ecological Model, 2) Building Community Capitals, and 3) Youth Development. The first is the Human Ecological Model developed by Uri Bronfenbrenner and others (See Appendix A). This model acknowledges that humans don't develop in isolation, but in relation to their family and home, school, community and society. The model also views the psychology, sociology, culture, and economics of human development as interactive and dynamic. Therefore, the RYD programs are designed with all of these dimensions in mind.
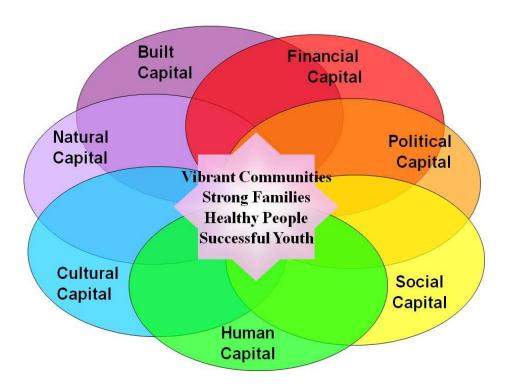
The second area is that of Building Community Capitals. To measure long-term impact on communities, a research based framework guides the RYD program. The framework outlines the

following seven (7) areas, or "Community Capitals," that can be improved: human, social, civic, cultural, natural, financial and built (See Appendix B for descriptions of the "capital" areas).

Youth in this program, working in partnership with adults, are expected to identify, implement and evaluate programs that improve their communities in one or more of the "capital" areas.

The third area is focused on Youth Development research. Youth Development principles and programs create the "context," or environments for positive development. Adults and older teens are charged with understanding these concepts and creating learning environments that provide youth with opportunities to build competencies in areas such as mastery, independence, generosity, and sense of belonging. See Appendix C for resources on Youth Development.

It is highly recommended that potential applicants review materials in these areas prior to writing an application.

Expected Outcomes

Projects funded through the RYD program must work toward achieving the knowledge, demonstrating the actions, and improving the conditions in their communities as articulated on the Outcomes Chart below (see Appendix D for the full Logic Model).

OUTCOMES		
Learning	Actions	Conditions
YOUTH Leadership skills: • goal setting • communication • team building • decision making • problem solving • conflict resolution Attitudes: • self confidence • efficacy • values diversity Motivations for: • community engagement • service leadership	YOUTH Assess & identify community needs Develop, implement, & evaluate action plans Ongoing community leadership Ethical leadership Positive cross cultural relationships	Improved **HUMAN** Capital Improved **SOCIAL** Capital Improved **CIVIC** Capital Improved **CULTURAL** Capital Improved **FINANCIAL** Capital Improved **BUILT** Capital Improved **NATURAL** Capital
ADULTS Positive youth development Youth as partners	ADULTS Work in partnership with youth on action plans	
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS Resources & policies needed to support youth Work with youth as partner & support their leadership roles	COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS Provide resources Recruit & embrace youth as leaders Value youth voice Change policies	

C. Program Area Description

For purposes of the RYD RFA, the **PROGRAM NAME** is **Rural Youth Development Grants** and the **PROGRAM CODE** is **AA-H**.

1. Community Based Programs and Site Selection

As stated in 7 U.S.C. 7630, this grant program was authorized to establish pilot projects to expand the programs carried out by the (eligible) organizations in rural areas and small towns. To that end, the national offices of the eligible organizations shall develop a competitive process to award money to their affiliates at local levels. The money can be awarded from the national organization directly to local chapters, troops, clubs or groups, but it is highly preferred that it be awarded through a higher level administrative office such as state land-grant universities, Girl Scout Councils, or State FFA organizations.

If funded, it is the responsibility of the national organization to select and support local projects that understand the philosophy of the program, agree to implement programs in accordance with this RFA, and the terms and conditions of any resulting awards and agree to work toward the outcomes as articulated in the Logic Model (see Appendix D.)

2. Sustainable Community Sites

Contingent on Federal funding, it is expected that the same communities will be funded for multiple years to produce long-term outcomes, address community needs, and continue sustainability after the Federal dollars are no longer available. National organizations should develop plans to integrate the communities and program strategies into the ongoing work of the organizations. Communities selected should have the assets and commitments to continue the program after Federal funding is no longer available.

Sustainability is the capacity of programs to continue to respond to the identified community needs. A sustained program maintains a focus consistent with its original goals and objectives, including the individuals and communities it was originally intended to serve. Some programs contract in scope while others expand and others maintain the original program activities. Some programs align with other organizations and institutions while others maintain their independence. The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of the particular activities that are delivered. To most effectively sustain programs an intentional effort must be made early in the program planning process.

3. Program Participants

Research has shown that the most significant positive outcomes for youth are achieved through programs that have sufficient scope, breadth and duration. In addition, the frequency in which youth are involved in programs and the intensity of their engagement makes a difference. Therefore, contingent on Federal funding, it is expected that a large majority of youth will participate in the RYD program over multiple years and be strongly engaged in the program.

4. Program Design

The program design for the RYD program focuses on leadership, citizenship and life skill development through service learning and social entrepreneurship strategies. While each eligible organization has the flexibility to develop their unique curriculum, training and technical assistance, program design, and evaluation methodology, the following characteristics are common:

- Youth and adults work in partnership where youth are seen as valuable resources to the community.
- A community needs assessment, town hall meeting or other strategy is utilized to identify and prioritize community needs. Ideally a broad cross-section of community leaders and stakeholders would be involved.

- A priority issue (or issues) is identified that can be addressed by the youth-adult teams. The issue should be one of broad and long-term significance of the community (i.e., health, obesity, hunger, safety, workforce development, water quality, entrepreneurship). Conversely the issue(s) should <u>not</u> be a one time, community service type project (i.e., picking up trash along the road, serving meals at a soup kitchen, collecting food for an animal shelter, visiting the elderly).
- The issue(s) should also address improving one or more community capitals as referenced in Appendix B. These include human, social, civic, cultural, natural, financial and built (infrastructure).
- An action plan is developed and implemented to address those needs.
- The impact on the community is evaluated using acceptable data collection and analysis methods.

5. Program Characteristics: Philosophies and Guiding Principles

The RYD programs will:

- Provide constructive and encouraging relationships among youth and adults, as well as youth and their peers;
- Provide safe environments;
- Provide access to multiple opportunities for youth to develop assets in the physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and/or social domains;
- Engage youth as partners with adults in their own development and the development of their communities;
- Be effectively child and youth focused;
- Build community-wide programs (not facilities) such as comprehensive community centers for residents of all ages;
- Connect the formal classroom to real-life experience and use the community as context for learning. Programs can be delivered in-school and/or during out-of-school time.
- Guide youth to see themselves as active participants in the future;
- Value youth as resources and embrace "authentic" youth voices at the table; and
- Be culturally sensitive and inclusive.

6. Community Project Characteristics

The RYD projects are expected to:

- Fund the same communities for 3-5 years contingent on federal funding and project performance;
- Engage the same youth for multiple years;
- Be conducted in the communities in which the youth reside, in order to give youth a sense of belonging and connectedness to their community;
- Address significant, long-term, complex community issues (i.e., hunger, nutrition, obesity, enhanced natural resources);

- Develop comprehensive strategies to address issues rather than one-time efforts (or a series of one-time efforts);
- Have long term impact. What is the residual and ongoing benefit to the community?;
- Expand over multiple years – for example, if the issue addressed is hunger, a progression might be:
    - **Year one** – pack backpacks of nutritious food for limited resource families to have over the weekends
    - **Year two** – continue backpacks, establish community gardens
    - **Year three** – continue backpacks and gardens; add educational components so families know how to raise their own gardens, preserve food, secure nutritious food, stretch their food dollars
    - **Year four** – continue backpacks, gardens and educational components; add "gleaning" programs where farmers let citizens glean the fields after the main harvest
    - **Year five** – coordinate farmer's markets and other outlets for the citizens to market their produce as a sustainable income for their families;
- Report impact at the community/beneficiary level (e.g., the United States Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] has metrics on how much the life of landfills can be extended due to recycling, how much energy will be saved by recycling rather than starting with raw materials, etc. A recycling program should be able to use these metrics to measure impact and show an actual cost benefit.);
- Clearly articulate outcomes;
- Develop program strategies appropriate to achieve the stated outcomes;
- Use evaluation methods appropriate to measure outcomes;
- Support community efforts with enough seed money for the youth to be successful;
- Choose projects that would likely be able to report impact within the time-line of the project; and
- Assume human and social capital of program participants shown in the logic model are measured by the national organizations. If human and/or social capital are chosen as the focus of the project, the beneficiaries need to be other than the youth involved (e.g., improving academic skills of younger youth through an intensive mentoring and tutoring program) or focus on indicators and outcomes that are not on the logic model.

7. Grant Amount and Duration

In FY 2011, an applicant may request a grant of no more than 40% of the available funds (a maximum of $680,000 given the anticipated amount available; the actual amount may vary) for duration of 18 months.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Approximately $1.7 million is available to support up to four grants under the Rural Youth Development (RYD) grants program in FY 2011. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Awards will be made on a competitive basis as a result of merit review and recommendations of a peer review panel.

Following the review of applications, successful awardees will have the opportunity to submit addendums to their proposals to administer a small amount of funds to support work across the grantee organizations. Items would include, but are not limited to: marketing pieces, searchable data bases of community projects, and web site development. The successful organization will serve as the fiduciary agent for the administration of projects decided upon by the successful grantees.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html.

B. Types of Applications

In FY **2011,** only new applications may be submitted to the **RYD** Program.

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the RYD Program. The only organizations eligible to submit applications are GSUSA, 4-H Council, FFA, and BSA. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V (Application Review Requirements).

In FY 2011, applications should build on the goals, outcomes and program implementation strategies established for FY 2008 projects. The majority of the communities selected by the national organizations for funding in FY 2011 shall be the same ones funded in FY 2008 – 2010 provided they are effective and demonstrating results and have not received a 5 year funding limit. The majority of youth participating in the program should be involved for multiple years.

C. Project Types

In FY 2011, a proposal may request a grant of no more than 40% of the available funds for duration of 18 months. Priority will be given to proposals that effectively demonstrate the capacity to develop programs that deliver desired outcomes as listed in the logic model (See Appendix D). It is strongly encouraged that a minimum of 50% of the funds received by the national organization be allocated to local communities.

The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is five years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. Section 7630, only the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), the National 4-H Council (4-H), the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), and the National FFA Organization (FFA) are eligible to apply. NIFA will accept only one application from each organization. The application must be developed and submitted by the national office of each respective organization.

In FY 2011, RYD awards will be distributed to each of the four (4) eligible organizations that submits an application in accordance with the requirements of this RFA, if the application is found to be worthy of support through the peer review process. The amount awarded to each organization will be determined based on review and recommendations of a peer review panel.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system**.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed **PRIOR** to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **"Get Registered" on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf**

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:
1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp.

2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov, click on "Apply for Grants" in the left-hand column, click on "**Step 1:** Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions," enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-F4HN-003444** in the appropriate box and click "Download Package." From the search results, click "Download" to access the application package.

   Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), **or to submit the application** then refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (http://www.grants.gov/). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

> Grants.gov customer support
> Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
> Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on Federal Holidays.
> Email: support@grants.gov

See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to "Convert Documents to PDF" on http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application please review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable request for applications. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:
- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. **Project Summary/Abstract**. **(Field 7)**

The summary should be approximately 300 words. The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and co-PDs should be listed on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the programs with clear linkages to the purposes, philosophies, and program designs articulated in this RFA. The abstract should articulate such things as: overall outcomes for youth, adults, community stakeholders and communities; program implementation methodologies; and plans to measure and communicate impact (and/or reference specific impacts that have already been made). The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.

b. **Project Narrative**.   **(Field 8)**

In preparing the project narrative, there are several resources that explain the philosophies of this program. Several of these resources can be found in the Appendices. It is strongly encouraged that these materials be reviewed before developing the application.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed <u>15</u> pages of written text which can be single or double spaced and up to 8 additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The font face should be easily readable (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman) and no smaller than 12 point. Margins must be at least one-inch. Some information may best be presented in tables, charts, or other visual images as compared to a narrative. Visual images (such as charts and spreadsheets) may be included and cannot exceed 8 pages.   Hence, the maximum total is 23 pages (15 pages narrative maximum plus 8 pages visuals maximum).

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(i) Statement of Need: Briefly describe how this program supports and enhances the mission, priorities and goals of the respective organization. Describe why the focus on reaching rural youth is important to the organization and the general characteristics of the communities likely to be selected for funding.

(ii) Research Base: From the information given in Part I., B. regarding the research bases on which this program is built (Ecological Model, Community Capitals Model, and Youth Development), describe how the national organization will know if concepts from these three areas are effectively embedded in the programs.

(iii) Community Project Characteristics: From the community project characteristics listed in Part I. C.6., describe how the national organization will ensure these elements are met.

(iv) Community Site Selection and Scope of Project: Discuss the process, timelines, and criteria for renewing existing and/or selecting new sub-grantees as well as the scope of the program. Include responses to each bullet below:

- Provide the projected number of sub-awards (e.g., Girl Scout Councils, Land Grant Universities, State FFA Organizations) to be funded with this 2011 funding (designate renewals and new).
- Provide the projected number of local (community-based) programs to be funded with this FY 2011 funding and the number of youth and adults to be reached (designate renewals and new). For the communities likely to be funded, indicate the number that has been funded in the past and for how many years. A template will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.
- Describe the process for funding (i.e., directly to community groups; through a state-level administrative body).
- Describe the time-line for selection of the communities and submission to NIFA.
- Provide the criteria that will be used to select rural locations and the process for selecting new sites and/or continuing existing sites. Criteria to select new sites and/or continue funding for existing sites should include, but is not limited to the aspects listed below. Sites should:
  - Be located in a rural area with high needs;
  - Agree to implement the program based on program and community project characteristics outlined in Part I, C.6.;
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the types of issues to be addressed (through long- term service learning, not a one-time community project);
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the community capitals framework;
  - Articulate an understanding of concepts such as youth-adult partnerships, service learning and youth development;
  - Agree to submit impacts of the project, at individual and community levels, based on the logic model in Part I. Appropriate evaluation methodologies must be used;
  - Have the desire and potential capacity to sustain the program once Federal funds are no longer available; and/or
  - Show individual and community impact, and good project management if it is a renewal.
- Describe the process that will be used to select community sites (will a RFA be developed, who will be involved in the selection process, etc.) and
- Describe how the national organization will ensure programs are operating effectively and according to the program and project characteristics, logic model, community capital framework, and youth development principles.

(v) Program Design and Methodologies: Describe the types of program designs and strategies that will be used to meet the outcomes of the program.

- Describe specific curriculum (e.g., "Challenge and Change") or other materials and resources designed to implement the program;
- Describe training and technical assistance for youth and adults;
- Describe the strategies that community programs will use to implement programs based on the broad framework outlined in the Program Design, Program Characteristics, and Community Project Characteristics sections in Part I, C. Include any modifications from the organization perspective;
- Include scope and duration of the programs (e.g., youth will be engaged in approximately 25 weeks of the program for a total of 100 hours). If programs are of short duration, describe how they will link to ongoing programs and opportunities in the community to provide long-term positive experiences for youth;
- Indicate if the programs will be based in-school or after-school. Describe how programs will link formal and non-formal education; and
- Explain the research base which supports the particular activities used to meet the stated objectives.

(vi) Evaluation Methodologies: Using the logic model in Appendix D, describe the evaluation design and methodologies that will be used to measure the extent to which program outcomes are met. The evaluation plan must include strategies for evaluating project impact at the individual and community levels. The plan must include strategies for evaluating youth, adults, stakeholders, program beneficiaries, and community-level impact as per the logic model. Indicate time-lines for which information is available regarding outcomes for youth, adults, community stakeholders, program beneficiaries, and community-level impact (increased community capitals). Describe new or different data that will be available as a result of maturing programming, modified plans, etc. Describe other data that the organization will be collecting beyond what is on the logic model.

(vii) Communication Plan: Briefly describe how results from this project will be communicated to NIFA, stakeholders and the public.

(viii) Project Management: Provide a brief summary of key staff and their functions, time lines, accounting procedures (i.e., for funds used by the parent organizations and local sites), reporting, and collaborative efforts with the grantees that will be used for this fiscal year grant.

c. Bibliography & References Cited - **(Field 9)**

If any references are used, the works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Narrative.

Other Attachments and Required Reports

(i) <u>Project Management Report</u>

The Project Management Report is due by COB on **June 7, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time).

As previously indicated, templates and tools for this report will be sent electronically to eligible grantees by the NIFA Program Leader on or before the date the RFA is posted on the NIFA web site. This report (both program and budget sections) must be submitted electronically to the NIFA National Program Leader at: ruralyouth@nifa.usda.gov.

FY 2011 applicants who were funded in FY's 2008 through 2010 must include a Summary of Project Management for prior awards. This information will be used in the review of the application. The narrative is limited to 5 pages, excluding budget tables, (this is in addition to the pages for the Project Narrative) and shall meet the same technical requirements as the rest of the application. Some of the information may be easier to present as tables, charts, visuals, etc.. The summary of progress shall address key project management issues.

(1)If the project is being implemented in accordance with the program, timelines and budgets approved in the FYs 2008 through 2010 applications, answer "yes" to each of the applicable bullets below and provide additional comments to support the effective management.

(2) If the project has run into difficulties or fallen behind timelines or budgets reported in the FYs 2008 through 2010 applications, the response for each of the applicable bullets below shall be "no".   Include a description of the situation(s), corrective action(s), and the timeline for implementing the corrective action(s).

Program Information:

Applicants are to respond to each of the following bulleted questions:

- Are all sub-grantees (curriculum, evaluation, community projects, etc.) fulfilling the contracts on time and with quality work? If not, what corrective actions have been taken?
- Have communities been selected based on the philosophies and frameworks outlined in this RFA? Is the scope and breadth of the program acceptable?
- Is staffing at national and local levels adequate to conduct the program as approved?
- Have results of the program been effectively communicated to stakeholders?
- Have the project directors provided adequate technical assistance and monitoring as evidenced by the selection and continuance of strong projects and the non-renewal or termination of others?
- Is the budget being spent as approved and on reasonable time lines? If there is a large carryover, what are the plans to spend it as approved? Is it on a reasonable time line for expenditure?
- Where required, have sub-grantee applications been submitted to NIFA in a timely fashion with very few errors? Has additional information requested by NIFA regarding sub-grantees been supplied in a timely manner with few errors?
- Have all sub-contracts been awarded? If not, why? Include the FY date the award was to be made.

- Are the community projects effectively reaching outcomes (see Logic Model, Appendix D) and reporting results for youth, adults, community stakeholders and building community capital? If not, what corrective action has been taken?

Budget Information:

Budget summary tables will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader and sent to the eligible organizations on or before the RFA is posted on the NIFA web site. They will cover the following information:
- FY 2008 budget (includes approved modifications)
- FY 2009 budget (includes carry over, approved funding, and budget modifications)
- FY 2010 budget (includes carry over, approved funding, budget modifications and plans to spend by August 2013)
- FY 2011 Requested Funds (includes carry over, potential funding, and plans to spend).

(ii) Program Accomplishment Report

The Accomplishment Report is due by COB on **June 7, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). The tables and tools referenced below will be sent electronically to the eligible applicants on or before the RFA is posted on the NIFA web site. This report must be submitted electronically to the NIFA National Program Leader at: ruralyouth@nifa.usda.gov.

Applicants funded in FYs 2008 through 2010 must submit a program accomplishment report from the 2010 year of funding (January 1 – December 31, 2010). The information should be developed for use in marketing materials similar to the 2009-2010 RYD Annual Report. This section is limited to 20 pages, excluding spreadsheets (in addition to the pages for the Project Narrative and for Project Management). The accomplishment report can be presented in a style, format, and/or medium of the organization's preference. At a minimum, it must include:
- Community site location(s).   NIFA National Program Leader will provide spreadsheets used to generate the 2009-2010 Annual Report map (that includes all projects funded since 2005) for project managers to update;
- Summary information about each community project with the status of the project (NIFA National Program Leader will provide spreadsheet template);
- Starting with a list of communities funded in FY 2008, indicate the communities funded by FYs, 2008/2009, 2009/2010, and 2010/2011. If the same communities were not funded for multiple years, give the justification (NIFA National Program Leader will provide spreadsheet template);
- One composite Output Template;
- Specific outcomes for youth, adults, and stakeholders, as expressed in the Logic Model (Appendix D), and measured by the organizations funded evaluation plan;
- Highlights of 8 strong programs (approximately 300 word narrative per program) that includes documented community level impact;
- Quotes from program participants; and
- Pictures at a minimum of 300 dpi.

Organizations are encouraged to include marketing materials, e.g., web sites.

(iii) Appendices to Project Description - (Field 12)

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the page limit. Do not, for example, eliminate or only briefly discuss a section in the Project Narrative with the idea the section would be fully covered in the Appendices. If something is not adequately addressed within the Project Narrative, it will not be scored or it may receive a low score.

(iv) Collaborative Arrangements - (Field 12)

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If consultants or collaborators are known at the time of application, vitae or resumes should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. Letter(s) of support must be dated and signed by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR/AR) who is approving the collaborative arrangement. Please submit this documentation as a separate PDF attachment.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

 Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Current and Pending Support – Each application must contain a complete listing of all active (current) projects. The listing must include the name of the project, source of funding (sponsor), the total amount of funding, and the effective and expiration date(s) of the project(s). **The total percent of time committed (active and pending) should not exceed 100%.** See the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide section 5.3 for further details. **Please note that this project should be reflected as the first item listed in the pending support section.**

5. R&R Personal Data

As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Use the R&R Budget Form for the RYD program. Prepare a budget detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. It is strongly encouraged that a minimum of 50% of the funds received by the national organization be allocated to local communities.
A budget narrative is required. All costs should be fully explained and justified. All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be

individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet and placed immediately behind the Budget form. If consulting, collaborative arrangements, or sub-contractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. Letters of intent or other evidence should be provided to show that collaborators have agreed to participate. For each arrangement involving the transfer of substantive programmatic work or the provision of financial assistance to a third party, a proposed statement of work, curriculum vitae, budget and budget narrative must be supplied. In multi-state/territory applications, a budget and budget narrative must be included for each state/territory involved. The lead state/territory and each participating state/territory must be identified. **The Budget Narrative must be submitted as a PDF attachment.**

(R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment - (Only required if the application includes subawards.)

All subawards' budgets must be included in the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment and a Budget Justification which includes an explanation for each budget item. **Applicants will note that the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form allows no more than 30 R&R Subaward Budget Files for a grant application.** Applicants are instructed to include any remaining subaward budget(s) under Field K. "Budget Justification", incorporating them as part of the required PDF attachment.

There are no matching requirements associated with the RYD program, and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

7. Supplemental Information Form
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

   a. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name **Rural Youth Development Grants** and the program code **AA-H**.

   b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List**.**

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **June 10, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV, A. for Grants.gov contact information.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of facility space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, amended the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. NIFA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

This limitation also applies to the recovery of indirect costs by any sub-awardee or subcontractor, and should be reflected in the sub-recipient budget.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov."

Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is hit, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on **June 10, 2011.** An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.

2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)

3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff performs precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

F. Potential Streamlining for Competitively Selected Sub-Award Programs

NIFA may agree to modify the requirements for the administration of the Rural Youth Development Grant sub-awards granted by GSUSA (to Girl Scout Councils), National 4-H Council (to Land-Grant Universities), the National FFA Organization (to State FFA Associations) and the Boy Scouts of America (to local Boy Scout groups).

For those organizations requesting a streamlining process the following items must be included in the proposal which is submitted to NIFA for consideration on or before **June 10, 2011**:

- A description of the sub-award program and the process that will be used to ensure effective management of the RYD fiscal resources (i.e., compliance with federal regulations and guidelines, no unallowable costs, documentation of expenditures, auditing procedures, adequate explanation and justification of budget items, reviewing and approving budgets, monitoring);

- A description of the approach that will be used to ensure that a fair and open decision-making process will be used to solicit and select potential applicants for each funding opportunity;
- Copies of Requests for Applications for all sub-award programs for which streamlining is requested;
- A description of the proposal review process;
- A list of reviewers (include their areas of expertise); and
- Criteria used to rank the applications during the selection process.

If the streamlining process is approved by NIFA, it will be noted on the Provisions section of the Award Face Sheet, Form NIFA-2009 and the organization will no longer be required to submit sub-award proposals and budgets to NIFA Awards Management Division for approval.

However, the organization will be required to obtain NIFA National Program Leader (NPL) approval for projects selected under the Competitive Program prior to issuing sub-awards or releasing funds for the projects. To obtain NPL approval the following information is to be submitted electronically:

- A table of sub-awards to be made that includes the project number, project director's name, institution, amount of the award, and the title of the project. **A template table will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.** The table is to be signed by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR).

- A check list of program and budget expectations for each state-level/GS Council sub-award. The check list must be signed by the project manager and their immediate supervisor or their AOR. Signatures certify the organization's responsibility for program and budget implementation standards. **A checklist template will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.**

- A check list of program and budget expectations for each community. These shall be submitted as community projects are identified and developed (which should be within approximately 2 months after the organizations have been notified of funding). The check list must be signed by the project manager and their immediate supervisor or the AOR. Signatures certify the organization's responsibility for program and budget implementation standards. **A checklist template will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.**

- A table that lists each community project and an abstract of each project. The abstract should be about 150 words in length and clearly state the issue and how it will be addressed. The table should be submitted with the individual community check lists. A template table will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.

The NPL will also review a random sample of full sub-award proposals to insure the fidelity of program and budget standards and administration of the projects.

This streamlining process was established as a trial effort starting with FY 2010 funding. The process will be evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness through FY 2011 before full implementation. The NIFA National Program Leader may revoke an approved streamlining agreement if the program or budget administration by a grantee is deemed sub-standard.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. 5 Points. Statement of Need: Does the application make a strong case for how the RYD program supports the mission and goals of the organization? Does the application document the importance for the organization to reach rural youth? Does the application adequately demonstrate the proposed communities as being in need and worthy of funding?

2. 5 Points. Research Base: Is it evident that organizational representatives fully understand the philosophies and research-based strategies expressed in Part I, Section B. and how to apply them in youth development programs? Is it evident that the organization has a plan to determine if these philosophies and strategies are effectively embedded in the programs?

3. 10 Points. Community Project Characteristics: Is it evident that the organization understands the community project characteristics of this program and is committed to ensuring sub-grantees will implement programs based on these characteristics?

4.   10 Points. Community Site Selection and Scope of Project: Is the scope of the program adequate (the number of sites to be funded and number of youth to be engaged)? Is there continuity in a majority of the number of communities and youth that are engaging for multiple years? Is the process for funding effective? Is the criteria and process for selecting communities

effective and efficient? Does it appear there will be effective program oversight? Does the proposed project meet the objectives of the funding and provide sufficient justification for funding? Does it appear the organization will use appropriate criteria to select new sites and/or continue funding for existing sites? Does it appear the project staff will ensure the operation of programs according to the program design, community project characteristics, logic model, community capital framework, and other elements articulated in this RFA?

5. <u>10 Points</u>. **Program Design and Methodologies**:
   - Is it clear that community programs will implement the program based on program and community project characteristics?
   - Are the training and technical assistance strategies, as well as curriculum and other resources, effective and adequate to support the implementation of this program within communities?
   - Are the scope and duration of the programs (e.g., youth will be engaged in approximately 25 weeks of the program for a total of 100 hours) adequate to produce positive outcomes? If programs are of short duration, are they linked to ongoing programs and opportunities in the community to provide long-term positive experiences for youth?
   - Will programs link formal and non-formal education?
   - Is the appropriate research base used to support the selected educational design and activities?

6. <u>10 Points</u>. **Evaluation Methodologies:** Will the evaluation plan measure individual and community level impact as articulated in the Logic Model (youth, adult volunteers, community leaders, program beneficiaries, community)? Are the evaluation designs and methodologies adequate to measure the extent to which program indicators and outcomes are being met?

7. <u>3 Points</u>. **Communication Plan:** Are there clear and acceptable strategies to communicate the results from this project to stakeholders and the public?

8. <u>2 Points.</u> **Project Management:** (For this FY 2011 application) Is there evidence of strong and adequate project management including key staff and their functions, time lines, accounting procedures (i.e., for funds used by the parent organizations and local sites), site monitoring, reporting, and collaborative efforts with the grantees?

9. <u>5 Points.</u> **Budget:** Is there an appropriate amount of money allocated to local communities? Is the total budget allocation adequate to reach project goals? Are items included that are not clearly linked to the priorities of this program? Where applicable, determination will be based upon experience attained and comparison of prior years' budgets to meet similar goals.

10. <u>25 Points</u>. **Success of Community Projects: Scoring for this item is based on responses to the questions outlined in the "Program Accomplishment Report" (see Part IV, B. "Other Attachments" for specific details):** Have the local community projects funded in FYs 2008 through 2010 achieved the youth, adult and community outcomes specified in the national RYD logic model? Has community capital increased in communities as a result of the community projects? Is information from marketing products of high quality and portray the RYD program

appropriately? Are site locations reflective of rural areas and adequately disbursed across the country? Have leaderships skills increased in youth and adults? Are output numbers adequate for the amount of funding?

PLEASE NOTE: Applicants who have not been previously funded by the RYD program will not be placed at a disadvantage based on this criteria.

11. 15 Points. Success in Previous Project Management for RYD Projects: Scoring for this item is based on responses to the questions outlined in the "Project Management Report" (see Part IV, B. " Other Attachments" subsections i and ii for specific details):

(i) Is there evidence that the applicant has implemented past RYD grants in accordance with the timelines, programs, and budgets reported in the FYs 2008 through 2010 applications and subsequent modifications; or

(ii) If past projects have run into difficulties or fallen behind timelines or budgets reported in the FYs 2008 through 2010 applications, is there sufficient evidence of corrective action(s), and a reasonable timeline for implementing corrective action(s)?

PLEASE NOTE: Applicants who have not been previously funded by the RYD program will not be placed at a disadvantage based on this criteria.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: http://www.hepinc.com.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an

applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30th of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds;

(6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;

(8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122 (2 CFR Parts 220 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—NIFA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions.

Previously funded RYD grantees must prepare and submit an annual report to NIFA that details all significant activities towards achieving the outputs and outcomes of the project as supported by evaluation methodologies. (See Project Management and Program Accomplishment Report information in Part IV., Section B., "Other Attachments," subsections i and ii for more details.)

Annual reports must cover the time period of January 1 through December 31, 2010 and must be submitted electronically to the NIFA National Program Leader at: ruralyouth@nifa.usda.org by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on **June 7, 2011**.

At the end of the grantee's final year, the grantee must prepare a final report to NIFA that summarizes all significant activities towards achieving the outcomes of the project, while providing final population demographics and trends in the evaluation results. Provide tables, graphs, pictures, and other figures to facilitate comparing targeted results with actual results, aggregated for the entire project. List all educational materials produced by the project. Include success stories. Reports must be received within 90 days of the expiration date of the award.

Required reports should be sent to the National Program Leader, as referenced under Part VII-Agency Contact; E-mail: ruralyouth@nifa.usda.org.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Nancy Valentine, Ed.D.; National Program Leader for Rural Youth Development; Division of Youth and 4-H, Institute of Youth, Family, and Community; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2225; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2225; Telephone: (202) 720-5347; Fax: (202) 720-9366; E-mail: nvalentine@nifa.usda.gov or

Amy McCune, Program Specialist, Division of Youth and 4-H, Institute of Youth, Family, and Community; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2225; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2225; Telephone (202) 720-2920; Fax (202) 720-9366; E-mail: amccune@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. <u>Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility</u>

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. <u>Changes in Project Plans</u>

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

For the purpose of this program, the following **additional definitions** are applicable:

Rural areas means an area not classified as urban (i.e., both urbanized areas and urban clusters) as determined by the last available decennial census.

Small towns mean towns with populations of 10,000 or less as determined by the last available decennial census.

Appendix A.

The Ecology of Human Development Dictates Program Integration

At first glance, rural youth development programs may seem to be disconnected, fragmented, and disparate. However, the issues facing families are complex and therefore, need complex systemic solutions. Added to the complexity of issues are the ever changing dynamics, communications, and interconnectedness of individuals with all of the elements of society.

Uri Bronfenbrenner, among the world's best-known psychologists, worked on defining what really matters in the development of human beings for over 60 years. His model of the ecology of human development (shown below) acknowledges that humans don't develop in isolation, but in relation to their family and home, school, community and society. Each of these ever-changing and multilevel environments, as well as interactions among these environments, is key to development.

Model from Huitt, W. (1997, 1999, 2005, & 2009). Educational Psychology Interactive.
http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/materials/sysmdlc.html. Retrieved June 23, 2009.

Bronfenbrenner's work views the psychology, sociology, culture, and economics of human development as nested settings in which a person develops over time throughout the life course.

It is this theoretical framework that provides the big picture of how the rural youth development programs work together to contribute to the development of youth, families, and communities.

Source: CSREES. (2009). 2009 Community Sustainability and Quality of Life Portfolio Annual Report
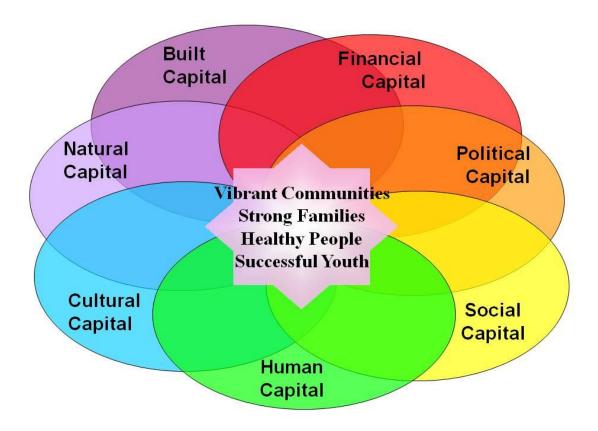
Appendix B.

Analyzing Change and Reporting Impact Within the Community Capitals Framework

A growing network of community development researchers and practitioners use a research-based framework developed around 7 community capitals to analyze change in rural areas in the U.S. and abroad (Flora, 2006). It is this work that forms the foundation and framework for the Rural Youth Development Program. Service Learning Community Action Projects strengthen human, social, civic, financial, cultural, natural and built capital to collectively produce vibrant communities, strong families, healthy people and successful youth.

The following discussion and adaptation of Community Capitals is taken from the work of Flora and Flora. All communities have resources that can be reduced or dissipated, saved for future use, or invested to create new resources. When those resources are invested to create new resources over a long time horizon, they are referred to as "capital." The capitals are both ends in themselves and a means to an end. Only by a dynamic balance among the capitals and capital reinvestments can sustainable strategies emerge to address the threats posed by a global economy, a rapidly changing climate, and other critical issues facing communities across America.

Community Capitals Framework Diagram

Natural capital refers to those assets that abide in a location including weather, geographic isolation, biodiversity, natural resources, amenities, and natural beauty. Water, soil and air – their quality and quantity – are a major building block of natural capital (Costanza, 1997; *Flora C. R., 2001). By building on local and scientific knowledge, healthy ecosystems may be developed with multiple community benefits, where human communities act in concert with natural systems, rather than simply to dominate these systems for short term gain.

Cultural capital reflects the way people "know the world" and how to act within it as well as their traditions and language. It includes cosmovisión (spirituality, and how the different parts are connected), ways of knowing, food and language, ways of being, and definition of what can be changed. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to, which voices have influence in what areas, and how creativity, innovation, and influence emerge and are nurtured. Monitoring the condition of community capitals allows excluded groups to effectively engage with the cultural capital of dominant groups. Cultural differences are recognized and valued, and ancestral customs and languages are maintained.

Human capital includes the skills and abilities of people to develop and enhance their resources, and to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge in order to increase their understanding, identify promising practices, and to access data to enhance community capitals. Formal and informal educations are investments in human capital (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). Human capital also includes health and leadership. The different aspects of human capital are important to acknowledge.

Developing human capital includes identifying the motivations and abilities of each individual to improve community capitals, increase the skills and health of individuals to improve community capitals, and recombine the skills and motivation of the community to more to a more sustainable collective future.

Social capital reflects the connections among people and organizations or the social glue to make things, positive or negative, happen (Coleman, 1988). It includes mutual trust, reciprocity, groups, collective identity, sense of a shared future, and working together (Putnam, 1993b). It is extremely important for creating a healthy ecosystem and a vital economy.

 Bonding social capital refers to those close ties that build community cohesion. Bridging social capital involves loose ties that bridge among organizations and communities (Nayaran, 1999). A specific configuration of social capital – entrepreneurial social capita1 (ESI) is related to community economic development (*Flora C. a., "Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure: A Necessary Ingredient, " 1993). ESI includes inclusive internal and external networks, local mobilization of resources, and willingness to consider alternative ways of reaching goals.

Political/Civic capital reflects access to power, organizations, connection to resources and power brokers (*Flora C. a., Rural Communities: Legacy and Change, 3rd edition, 2008). Political capital is the ability of a group to influence standards, regulations and enforcement of those regulations that determine the distribution of resources and the ways they are used. When a

community has high political capital, its people have the collective ability to find their own voice and to engage in actions that contribute to the well being of their community.

Indicators of political/civic capital include organized groups work together, local people know and feel comfortable around powerful people, including scientists and government functionaries, and local concerns are part of the agenda.

Financial capital refers to the public and private financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, to underwrite businesses development, to support civic and social entrepreneurship, and to accumulate wealth for future community development. Financial capital also refers to personal financial resources available for families to buy goods and services, invest in business opportunities, support the community tax base, and save for emergencies and retirement. Money that is spent for consumption is not financial capital. Money that is put aside and not invested is also not yet financial capital. It must be invested to create new resources to become capital.

Financial capital includes remittances savings (particularly by increasing efficiency through better management, credit more skilled workers, use of technology and better regulations), income generation and business earnings (by increasing human capital through skills and social capital through more integrated value chains), payment for environmental services, loans and credit, investments, taxes, tax exemptions user fees, and gifts/philanthropy. Often rural communities are viewed as bereft of financial capital, but, particularly with increasing globalization of the labor force, out-migrants can be even better organized to invest in their communities in a way that is cumulative for rural development.

Built capital includes the infrastructure that supports the other capitals. It includes such diverse human-made objects and systems such as sewers, water systems, electronic communication, soccer fields and processing such plants. And it includes the kinds of scientific equipment needed for the identification and eradication of invasive species.

For more information on community capitals, the Iowa State University web site has several resources. Two specific sites are:
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/projects/commcap/7-capitalshandout.pdf and
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/pubs/Communitycapitals.pdf.

Source: CSREES. (2009). 2009 Community Sustainability and Quality of Life Portfolio Annual Report

Appendix C.

Research Resources to Use in Framing the Project Narrative

1. "Key Issues Facing Rural Youth." Daniel F. Perkins. Southern Rural Development Center Series #228. Web site: http://www.srdc.msstate.edu/publications/archive/228.pdf.

2. "Community Programs to Promote Youth Development." Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer Gootman, Eds., National Academy Press, Washington, DC. Web site: http://www.nap.edu .

3. The following materials are located on the National 4-H Headquarters web site at: http://www.national4-Hheadquarters.gov. (**Note: Although the materials refer to 4-H, the same elements and concepts apply to all youth development programs**.)

- The 4-H Youth Development Environment. Cathann Kress, USDA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_environment.pdf);

- The 4-H Youth Development Ideals. Cathann Kress, USDA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_ideals.pdf);

- Habits of Remarkable 4-H Youth Development Programs. Cathann Kress, USDA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/habits.pdf);

- Meeting Needs of Youth. Cathann Kress, USDA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4needsbrochure.pdf);

- Issues Facing Rural Youth: A Compendium of Research, Reports, and Public Opinion Polls. Nancy Valentine and Jim Kahler, USDA, and Susan Cippoletti, Girl Scouts of the USA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/ruralresearch.pdf).

- 4-H Essential Elements. Cathann Kress, USDA (http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/elements.ppt

Appendix D. **NIFA Rural Youth Development Logic Model**

SITUATION	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
Rural Experiences	What we invest	What we do	Number of:	Learning	Actions	Conditions
Isolation	Caring adults	Train youth, staff & community partners	Community sites	**YOUTH** Leadership skills: • goal setting • communication • team building • decision making • problem solving • conflict resolution	**YOUTH** Asses & identify community needs	Improved **HUMAN** Capital
Limited opportunities & programs	Community, county, state & national staff	Create positive youth development programs	Youth (by demographics)		Develop, implement, & evaluate action plans	Improved **SOCIAL** Capital
Limited meaningful employment	Young people	Provide educational, leadership, & service opportunities	Adults –staff, volunteers & citizens (by demographics)	Attitudes: • self confidence • efficacy • values diversity	Ongoing community leadership	Improved **CIVIC** Capital
Limited access to health care	Infrastructure		Youth in decision making &/or leadership roles	Motivations for: • community engagement • service leadership	Ethical leadership	Improved **CULTURAL** Capital
Poverty	Federal, state and private cash & in-kind resources	Connect formal & non-formal education	Community issues identified		Positive cross cultural relationships	
Limited access to technology	Time	Develop products, curriculum & evaluation tools	Community projects implemented & evaluated			Improved **FINANCIAL** Capital
Obesity	Knowledge	Provide technical assistance	Materials & resources created	**ADULTS** Positive youth development	**ADULTS** Work in partnership with youth on action plans	
Sudden shifts in cultural diversity	Community citizens and leaders	Engage community citizens	Community, state & national collaborations	Youth as partners		Improved **BUILT** Capital
Limited professional & civic role models	Research base	Secure resources	New youth groups formed	**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS** Resources & policies needed to support youth	**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS** Provide resources	
Lack of opportunities for authentic voice in the community	Curriculum	Secure support from policy & decision makers	Cash & in-kind resources leveraged		Recruit & embrace youth as leaders	Improved **NATURAL** Capital
Experimentation with negative behaviors	Technology	Implement marketing & communications plans	Staff time value	Work with youth as partner & support their leadership roles	Value youth voice	
	Agencies & organizations		Policies changed		Change policies	
	Equipment		Media contacts			

ASSUMPTIONS Engaging youth and adults in a partnership of educational, leadership, and service opportunities will increase community capital in rural environments.

EXTERNAL FACTORS Successful increases in community capitals are dependent upon funding levels, community support, youth iniatative, and the expertise of support from program staff and volunteers.